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THE CHAR—OR SALMO ALPINUS.

Some years ago it was not suspected, nor is it yet generally believed, that the char is an inhabitant of most of the mountain lakes of Ireland. Dr. Smith was the first to notice its existence in two of the small lakes in the Cumberagh mountains, in the county of Waterford, one of which we have given a view of in our present number. He describes the char of these lakes as about two feet long, the male grey, and the female yellow-bellied; and the flesh, he adds, is as red and curdy as a salmon, and eats more delicious than any trout. Notwithstanding this account of Dr. Smith, the great traveller and naturalist, Pennant, did not believe in its existence in Ireland, a circumstance the more extraordinary, considering that he made a tour, as he says, in "that hospitable kingdom, and travelled from Dublin to Ballycastle, the Giant's Causeway, Coleraine, the extremity of the county of Donegal, Londonderry, Strabane, Enniskillen, Galway, Limerick, the Lakes of Killarney, Kinsale, Cork, Cashel, Waterford, Kilkenny, and Dublin." But the mystery of his ignorance is explained by himself. "Such," he states, "was the conviviality of the country, that my journey proved as *maigre*, as my entertainment was *gras*, so it never was a dish fit to be offered to the public."

The char was next stated to be found in one of the lakes of Donegal—Lough Esk—by Mr. Wilson, the author of the *Irish Post-Chaise Companion*. He describes it as a most delicate fish, and generally about nine inches long. He adds, that they are not to be caught by bait, but feeding in deep water, are only taken in nets.

Their existence in Ireland was at length put beyond dispute by the celebrated naturalist, the late Mr. Templeton, of Belfast, who, in an able article addressed to the author of the *Antrim Survey*, established the facts of their being found in Lough Eglis, in Fermanagh, and Lough Neagh, and of their identity with the char of Windermere and Wales. Of the examples which fell under his observation, he gives the following account:—

"They are generally about twelve inches long, though I have seen one of fifteen.

The nostrils double.

Teeth in the jaws, roof of the mouth, and on the tongue.

Back, dusky brown; sides, pale reddish brown, with small spots of bright bay; bellies white, with a tinge of reddish.

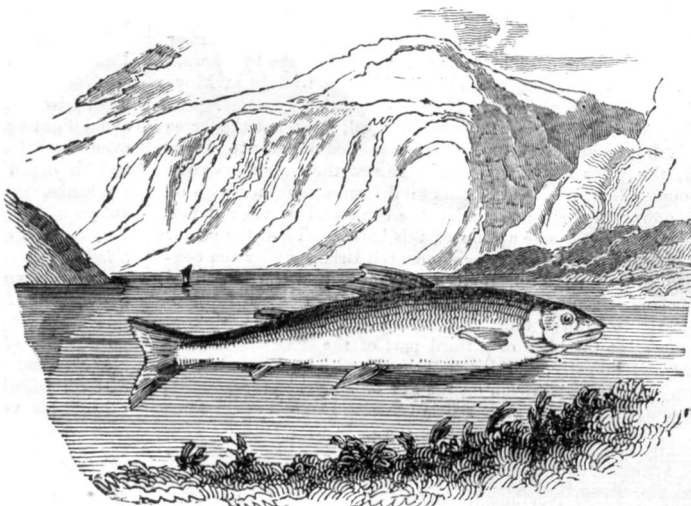
First dorsal fin 11 rayed.

Second very small.

Pectoral 11 rayed. } The first complete ray of each strong
Ventral and anal 8. } and white."

The char was next noticed as existing in Lough Dan, one of the Wicklow lakes, by Wright, in his *Guide to that County*; but he states that their existence in any of the other lakes of that county, is not known. The fact, however, is well known to sportsmen of their being found in Luggelaw and the lakes of Glandalough, in which, however, their greatest size does not exceed seven inches.

Both Pennant, Wilson, and Templeton, erred in supposing that the char could only be taken by nets, in consequence of the deep water which they inhabit. They are sometimes taken in shallow water, and both with fly and minnow, in the county of Wicklow, and latterly at Coniston-Water, in Cumberland,—



Char, with View of Lough Dan.

a mode introduced there from Ireland by an Irish gentleman: the fly should be small and of a gaudy colour.

"The char," says Sir Humphrey Davy, "is always in its colour a very brilliant fish, but in different countries there are many varieties in the tint." Those of the Wicklow lakes are of a bluish black on the back, and on the belly, silvery, with a slight tinge of red—the pectoral fins of a decided red.

It is a curious and interesting fact that, the char of Lough Dan have been found during this summer in great quantities on the surface of the lake, dead or dying. P.

THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF.

The following account of the battle of Clontarf, is translated chiefly from an ancient Irish MS. entitled *Cath Chluana Tarbh*, corrected, however, in many parts from the *Annals of Innisfallen* and *Ulster*, especially in the list of the chieftains who fell in that remarkable combat. The account of the deaths of Brian and Morogh is translated literally from the original Irish, as given by Mr. Hardiman in his *Irish Minstrelsy*, vol. II. p. 361. As the popular and generally received accounts of an event of so great importance in Irish history, these translations will, doubtless, prove interesting to the Irish reader; but it must be confessed that in some of the details there appears even an excessive allowance of exaggeration:—

It is said that towards the end of Brian Borumha's reign Ireland flourished in all earthly blessings; and that so strictly were the laws obeyed that, as we are informed by Mac Liag, chief antiquary of Ireland in Brian's time, a lady might travel unattended from *Tonn Chliodhna* to *Tonn Tuaithe* (i. e. from one extremity of Ireland to the other) with a gold ring on the top of a wand without being robbed or molested. No Danes were left in the kingdom, but such a number of artisans and merchants in Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Limerick, as he knew could be easily mastered at any time, should they dare to rebel, and these he very wisely (as he thought) permitted to remain in those seaport towns for the purpose of encouraging trade and traffic, as they possessed many ships and were experienced sailors.

But such prosperity was of short continuance: Maelmordha, who usurped the crown of Leinster in 999, by the assistance of the Danes, being at an entertainment at *Kincora*, saw Morogh, Brian's eldest son at a game of chess, and advised his antagonist to a movement which lost Morogh the game; whereupon Morogh observed to him with a sneer, *that if he had given as good advice at the battle of Glen-mama, the Danes would not have received so great an overthrow.*

To which Maelmordha replied: "my instructions the next time shall guide them to victory," and Morogh with contempt bade defiance. Maelmordha became enraged, retired to his bed chamber, and did not appear at the banquet, but passed the night in restless anger, and ruminating his country's ruin. Early next morning he set out for Leinster, without taking his leave of the monarch, or any of his household, to shew that he was bent upon desperate revenge. The good monarch on hearing of his departure, sent one of his servants after him to request his reconciliation with Morogh; the servant overtook him east of the Shannon not far from Killaloe and delivered his message from the monarch. Maelmordha, who all the while listened with indignation, as soon as the servant was done speaking, raised the rod of yew which he had in his hand, and with three furious blows thereof fractured the servant's skull, to make known to Brian how he rejected such reconciliation. He pursued his way on horseback to Leinster, where the next day, he assembled his nobles, represented to them the insult he received at Kincora, and inflamed them to so great a degree that they renounced their allegiance to Brian, confederated with the Danes, and sent the monarch defiance.